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SUBJECT: Media Reaction: Secretary of State's Trip to Africa

¶1. Summary: Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's African trip generated an editorial in a Beninese right-of-center independent daily newspaper. The author views the Secretary of State's seven-nation trip to Africa as a response to China's growing presence on the continent. End summary.

¶2. On August 7, the right-of-center independent daily L'Autre Quotidien carried an editorial titled, "Hillary Clinton in Africa: Will the war between China and the United States take place in Africa?" The editorial postulates that the U.S. and Chinese interests in Africa were historically more strategic and ideological, rather than financial and that there is not a shadow of a doubt that the CIA was involved in the elimination of Patrice Lumumba because of his "progressive" position regarding communism. The author further opined that "From the nineties, towards the end of the cold war, the Chinese were seeking to obtain raw materials, including the agricultural products, while Americans were more interested in oil, exploring all the African coasts, from Mauritania to Angola, via Nigeria and Sao Tome and Principe, which undoubtedly explains the Secretary of State' decision to visit Nigeria.... "In the seventies and eighties, Washington did not wait for the oil boom to support Jonas Savimbi's UNITA party against the ruling party, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, then supported by Russia and its ally, Cuba." ... "Thus, by visiting Angola, even if Secretary Clinton is pursuing the oil angle, her visit is also motivated by the desire to support democracy and President Eduardo dos Santos."

¶3. In the 1990's in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a crossroads in Africa described as a geological scandal because of the immense underground mineral resources, dark clouds rose between the U.S. and China because power was held by Laurent-Desire Kabila, a Lumumba sympathizer who was close to China. But with Joseph Kabila as President, everything became possible again.

¶4. The stop in South-Africa is seen as a way to honor the symbol of a post-apartheid multiracial nation that has the support of the United States and is also the continent's strongest economy. The author characterizes Liberia as another symbol worth visiting because it is the first independent state in Africa, partially populated with emancipated slaves, but also the first African country to have elected a woman as President.

¶5. If Cape Verde is a model of good governance, according to Washington, Kenya no longer benefits from U.S. affection because of the 2007 electoral violence. However, Kenya is still somewhat important because of its geographical position and its importance in the fight against terror.

¶6. The author summarizes the U.S. Secretary of State's trip to Africa as focusing on oil, good governance, and the fight against terrorism. He asserts, in contrast, that the Chinese are looking for raw materials and they are not preoccupied with terrorism or corruption. Their main concern is to isolate Taiwan and pull the

rug from under the Tibetans. Given that each country has a specific concern, what is the likelihood that the Chinese and Americans will cross each other on the African continent?"

Brown